

Judges 19 - Thursday, March 7th, 2013

Judges 19:1 And it came to pass in those days, when *there was* no king in Israel, that there was a certain Levite staying in the remote mountains of Ephraim. He took for himself a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah.

- Here in verse one, we sort of see the stage set, for what could arguably be amongst the most disturbing chapters in the pages of Holy Writ.
- Not only was there no king in Israel everyone did what seemed right in their own eyes in Israel, and as such it led to unspeakable depravity.
- I usually look forward to the teaching of God's Word, but I must confess that the only thing I'm looking forward to here is getting through it.

- That's not to say that we're going in any way skip over it, this because God has deemed it necessary to include it, and for good reason.
- The reason being is; what we're about to read and study can serve as a warning concerning the depths of depravity to which man can sink.
- One commentator of F.B. Meyer had this to say, "what unfolds in the rest of this chapter is so distasteful, he recommended not reading it."

F.B. Meyer commenting on this first verse, wrote: "It will be sufficient to ponder these words, which occur four times in the book, without reading further in this terrible chapter, which shows the depths of the depravity to which may sink apart from the grace of God."

- That said; I don't believe I have permission to skip over this "terrible chapter," because doing so has the propensity to be to our own peril.
- By that I mean; this chapter has the strength that it has in terms of how graphic it is because of the power of the message contained in it.
- Namely, when we're deceived and have believed we can just do whatever seems right in our own eyes, that this too will be our end as well.

(2) But his concubine played the harlot against him, and went away from him to her father's house at Bethlehem in Judah, and was there four whole months.

- Here we're told that the concubine that the Levite took for himself left him for a period of four months and during that time became a harlot.
- Actually, it was for this reason that God warned against the practice of taking a concubine in that it might seem right but it never ends good.
- While this practice was allowable in the Old Testament Law, it wasn't ordained or approved by the Lord, as it went against God's design.

(3) Then her husband arose and went after her, to speak kindly to her *and* bring her back, having his servant and a couple of donkeys with him. So she brought him into her father's house; and when the father of the young woman saw him, he was glad to meet him. (4) Now his father-in-law, the young woman's father, detained him; and he stayed with him three days. So they ate and drank and lodged there. (5) Then it came to pass on the fourth day that they arose early in the morning, and he stood to depart; but the young woman's father said to his son-in-law, "Refresh your heart with a morsel of bread, and afterward go your way." (6) So they sat down, and the two of them ate and drank together. Then the young woman's father said to the man, "Please be content to stay all night, and let your heart be merry." (7) And when the man stood to depart, his father-in-law urged him; so he lodged there again. (8) Then he arose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart, but the young woman's father said, "Please refresh your heart." So they delayed until afternoon; and both of them ate. (9) And when the man stood to depart—he and his concubine and his servant—his father-in-law, the young woman's father, said to him, "Look, the day is now drawing toward evening; please spend the night. See, the day is coming to an end; lodge here, that your heart may be merry. Tomorrow go your way early, so that you may get home." (10) However, the man was not willing to spend that night; so he rose and departed, and came opposite Jebus (that *is*, Jerusalem). With him were the two saddled donkeys; his concubine *was* also with him.

- There's something here that I would like to point out concerning why the father-in-law insists this Levite stay with them and his daughter.
- One thought is that he was delighted that a Levite would even still be interested in his daughter after she committed adultery and left him.
- Another thought is that while that culture has always been known to be hospitable, he sort of crossed the line in the sense that he meddled.

- The reason I suggest this is that he knows his daughter's character, or in this case, her lack of it, and as such wants to get them together.
- If you really think about it even though she's a concubine she's legally recognized as a wife, who as many do will run home after a fight.
- To me, this speaks to a problem in many a marriage. When there's a conflict, either the wife or the husband will run home to mom and dad.

(11) They *were* near Jebus, and the day was far spent; and the servant said to his master, "Come, please, and let us turn aside into this city of the Jebusites and lodge in it." (12) But his master said to him, "We will not turn aside here into a city of foreigners, who *are* not of the children of Israel; we will go on to Gibeah." (13) So he said to his servant, "Come, let us draw near to one of these places, and spend the night in Gibeah or in Ramah." (14) And they passed by and went their way; and the sun went down on them near Gibeah, which belongs to Benjamin. (15) They turned aside there to go in to lodge in Gibeah. And when he went in, he sat down in the open square of the city, for no one would take them into *his* house to spend the night.

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is, nobody is inviting them into their home as was the custom of the day.
- This begs the question of why the conspicuous absence of hospitality in a culture that is known for it, even to this day, in the Middle East.
- I'm of the belief that the townspeople knew what would happen to whoever would show hospitality to him by letting them stay in their home.

(16) Just then an old man came in from his work in the field at evening, who also *was* from the mountains of Ephraim; he was staying in Gibeah, whereas the men of the place *were* Benjamites. (17) And when he raised his eyes, he saw the traveler in the open square of the city; and the old man said, "Where are you going, and where do you come from?" (18) So he said to him, "We *are* passing from Bethlehem in Judah toward the remote mountains of Ephraim; I *am* from there. I went to Bethlehem in Judah; *now* I am going to the house of the LORD. But there *is* no one who will take me into his house, (19) although we have both straw and fodder for our donkeys, and bread and wine for myself, for your female servant, and for the young man *who is* with your servant; *there is* no lack of anything." (20) And the old man said, "Peace *be* with you! However, *let* all your needs *be* my responsibility; only do not spend the night in the open square." (21) So he brought him into his house, and gave fodder to the donkeys. And they washed their feet, and ate and drank. (22) As they were enjoying themselves, suddenly certain men of the city, perverted men, surrounded the house *and* beat on the door. They spoke to the master of the house, the old man, saying, "Bring out the man who came to your house, that we may know him *carnally!*"

- If this sounds like what happened to Lot, in Sodom and Gomorrah, that's because this is what happened to Lot in Sodom and Gomorrah.
- I'm not trying to be cute. I'm just wanting to make an observation here as it relates to the horrific depravity and the carnality in that day.
- What makes this so utterly reprehensible is that Sodom and Gomorrah was a pagan city, whereas this perverted city is an Israelite city.

- For this Levite to go to this city would seemingly indicate that he must have somehow felt safe amongst his own people here in this land.
- This is one of the reasons we as Christians can err greatly when we somehow feel safe doing business with other professing Christians.
- Let me explain, sometimes, professing Christian business owners will purposely prey on, and take advantage of, those gullible Christians.

- Please don't misunderstand what I'm saying here, I'm not saying that we shouldn't support Christian business, I'm just saying be careful.
- Personally, I have been on both sides of this table. I've done business with Christian businessmen, and I've been a Christian businessman.
- Conversely, I've done considerably more business with non-Christians, and what's sad is, I've had a better experience with many of them.

- There's something else here that we need to take a look at before we move on, notice how that this seems to be the norm for these people.
- The reason I say that is because nobody seems to blink an eye when these men do this. In other words, no one in that city even protests.
- I would submit; they were all so corrupted and perverted that this had actually become for them a regular and accepted practice to them.

(23) But the man, the master of the house, went out to them and said to them, "No, my brethren! I beg you, do not act *so* wickedly! Seeing this man has come into my house, do not commit this outrage. (24) Look, *here is* my virgin daughter and *the man's* concubine; let me bring them out now. Humble them, and do with them as you please; but to this man do not do such a vile thing!" (25) But the men would not heed him. So the man took his concubine and brought *her* out to them. And they knew her and abused her all night until morning; and when the day began to break, they let her go. (26) Then the woman came as the day was dawning, and fell down at the door of the man's house where her master *was*, till it was light. (27) When her master arose in the morning, and opened the doors of the house and went out to go his way, there was his concubine, fallen *at* the door of the house with her hands on the threshold. (28) And he said to her, "Get up and let us be going." But there was no answer. So the man lifted her onto the donkey; and the man got up and went to his place. (29) When he entered his house he took a knife, laid hold of his concubine, and divided her into twelve pieces, limb by limb, and sent her throughout all the territory of Israel.

- You'll forgive me for not spending too much time here with these verses, but if I could be so candid, this account makes me want to just cry.
- Be that as it may, and suffice it to say, there is something in the narrative that I believe I'd be grossly remiss were I not at least address it.
- What I'm speaking of is the unconscionable, and unthinkable action, or perhaps better said, the inaction, of this husband to his poor wife.

- If you're anything like me, and I suspect that you are, you're likely having considerable difficulty with two very disturbing verses in the text.
- First, we're told in verse twenty-five, her husband did absolutely nothing when the man they were staying with gave his wife to these men.

- What the second disturbing verse tells us is even more reprehensible than the first, notice what verse twenty-seven tells us about this man.
- We're told that he woke up in the morning and was actually ready to leave so he could go on his way, only to find his dying wife at the door.
- There are two things I just can't wrap my mind around, the first of which is that he, as her husband, could actually sleep through everything.

- Not only does he save his own skin by letting these men do this to his wife, he was able to get a good night sleep and sleep all night long.
- Not only was he able to sleep all night, he was ready to go without her in the morning. How can this be? It's the result of man's depravity.
- If this isn't depraved enough, what he does next is just downright evil. As God is my witness, I wish there were never a verse twenty-nine.

(30) And so it was that all who saw it said, "No such deed has been done or seen from the day that the children of Israel came up from the land of Egypt until this day. Consider it, confer, and speak up!"

- The chapter ends with a most interesting statement on the part of all who had witnessed this unspeakable evil among the children of Israel.
- So much so, that there is an agreement of sorts to consider it, confer about it, and even speak up about it, so as to never ever forget it.
- Sadly, we know later in Israel's history, the children of Israel would become as deeply corrupted as they were here in the days of Gibeah.

Hosea 9:9 NKJV They are deeply corrupted, As in the days of Gibeah. He will remember their iniquity; He will punish their sins.

Hosea 10:9 NKJV "O Israel, you have sinned from the days of Gibeah; There they stood. The battle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity Did not overtake them.